

OFFICIAL PROCLAMATIONS

Official *Recovery Month* Proclamations

A proclamation officially commemorates a specific issue, such as the benefits of treatment and recovery on your local community. Federal officials, governors, State legislators, or city, county, and town officials can issue a proclamation designating September as **National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover (Recovery Month)** in their jurisdiction. When a local government official endorses **Recovery Month**, more people in their community are educated about substance use and mental disorders and the benefits that treatment and recovery support services have on our society as a whole. In addition, **Recovery Month** spreads the message that behavioral health is essential of health and one's overall wellness, and that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people with substance use and mental disorders can and do recover.

Your proclamation supporting **Recovery Month** upholds the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) **Strategic Initiatives**, particularly the goals of increasing public awareness of substance use and mental disorders, health reform education and offering recovery support through an individual, program, and system approach. Throughout the year, hundreds of proclamations have been signed to support **Recovery Month**, including 176 issued in communities across the country in 2010. The President of the United States has signed a proclamation declaring September as **Recovery Month** for the past 10 years, further recognizing substance use and mental disorders are conditions that need to be addressed, just like any other illness.

The proclamation should highlight the mission of **Recovery Month**—to celebrate individuals who have achieved long-term recovery, acknowledge those who work in the prevention, treatment and recovery services field, and to encourage individuals in need to seek help. Call attention to this year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone,"** which emphasizes that all American's have the opportunity to access provisions within the Affordable Care Act and the Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA), aimed to improve physical and emotional health while ensuring people will receive the care they need at a more reasonable cost. Use this document to learn how to draft a proclamation, tips on gaining support from government officials, and ways to publicize the signing of your proclamation.

Did you know that under the Affordable Care Act, small businesses (those with 50 employees or less) may seek grants that will help them offer comprehensive wellness programs for their employees, including addressing substance use and mental disorders? Refer to the "Fast Facts About Health Reform, Substance Use and Mental Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery" document in this toolkit for more detailed information on the Affordable Care Act and the Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA).

How Do I Secure a Government Official or Agency?

Use the following tips to achieve support from a local official and secure his or her signature on your proclamation:

- **Research the local officials in your community**, especially focusing on those who have supported health related issues in the past.
- **Inquire about a local official's interest in issuing a *Recovery Month* proclamation.** Reach out to a staff member in the official's communications office at least 3 months in advance of **Recovery Month**. During your initial conversation, introduce the annual celebration, the details of your activities, and why it's significant in your community. Be sure to understand the process of getting a proclamation signed and which style the official prefers (traditional or modern). If you have worked with an official in the past, mention it to trigger their memory.
- **Draft your proclamation once you have determined the official's interest and preferred writing style (traditional or modern).** Prepare your proclamation in advance of your initial conversation so that the officials can better understand the mission of **Recovery Month**; after your initial discussion, you can alter it accordingly.

- **Follow up with the official's office frequently** since you might not hear back from the official's office for a few days or even weeks. Don't hesitate to check the status of your proclamation and offer to provide any additional information the official may need.

What are the Differences between Traditional and Modern Proclamations?

- There are two styles to choose from when writing your **Recovery Month** proclamation: traditional and modern. While they differ in format, the ultimate purpose is the same, and they are equally effective. **Traditional proclamations** begin with a series of statements starting with the words "whereas," meaning "because," "inasmuch," or "since." Each clause states the problems or issues being addressed and is followed by a concluding phrase beginning with "therefore," which specifically requests the support or action needed. On the other hand, **modern proclamations** are written in a letter format. The **Presidential Proclamation** is typically written in a modern format. Samples of both formats are included at the end of this document. Previous signed proclamations can be viewed on the **Recovery Month** website at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov> under the "Proclamations" section.

Use the following resources to include local information about treatment and recovery services in your proclamation, as well as statistics relevant to your community:

- **Single-State Agency (SSA)** for substance use and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery support services
- SAMHSA's **National Survey on Drug Use and Health**
- SAMHSA's Recovery Statement
- SAMHSA's National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS)
- SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network
- SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set
- HealthCare.gov
- Kaiser Family Foundation's Focus on Health Reform
- Mental Health America
- State Directory of Consumer Affairs (NAC/SMHA)
- The Parity Implementation Coalition's Parity Toolkit

Expanding the Reach of Your Proclamation

Once an official has decided to sign and issue your **Recovery Month** proclamation, use the following information to maximize publicity:

- **Arrange a press conference or "town-hall" meeting.** Arrange to have the official sign the proclamation during a press conference, or he or she can speak at a forum after the signing featuring other panelists such as treatment providers, policymakers, and individuals in recovery. Incorporate the signing of a proclamation into another **Recovery Month** occasion, such as a rally or athletic event. Refer to the "Promoting **Recovery Month** with Events" piece for details on how to plan events.
- **Distribute copies of the signed proclamation** to the "local" or "metro" desks of local newspapers, along with a press release announcing the issuance of the **Recovery Month** proclamation. Refer to the tips on how to write a press release in the "Press Materials for Your **Recovery Month** Event" document in this toolkit.
- **Display copies of the proclamation in the lobbies of public places,** such as libraries, schools, college campuses, community mental health centers, Medicare centers, and government buildings. Remember to obtain permission from the location first before displaying these copies.

- Post a copy of the proclamation on the **Recovery Month** website, <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>, and send it electronically to recoverymonth@samhsa.hhs.gov or in hard copy to:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
ATTN: Consumer Affairs
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
1 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor
Rockville, MD 20857

How Do I Share My Proclamation's Outcomes and Successes?

Join others who support **Recovery Month** by sharing your successes, which helps others draft an effective proclamation in the future. After your event, remember to:

- Post your proclamation on the **Recovery Month** website, [Facebook page](#), and [Twitter account](#). If you need help on how to use these online tools, visit the “[New Media Glossary](#)” and “[Developing Your Social Network](#)” documents in this toolkit.
- Share how you used these **Recovery Month** proclamation tips by completing the “Customer Satisfaction Form.”

Additional Recovery Month Resources

For further information on **Recovery Month**, substance use and mental disorders, treatment and recovery, use the following resources:

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD) – Provides 24-hour free and confidential information about substance use and mental disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery referrals in English or Spanish.
- **SAMHSA's “Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment” Website** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>) – Contains information about treatment options and special services located in your area.
- **The Recovery Month Website** (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov>) – Contains all the materials from this toolkit and a wide variety of relevant resources.
- **SAMHSA's ADS Center** (<http://www.stopstigma.samhsa.gov>) – Provides information and assistance to develop successful efforts to counteract prejudice and discrimination and promote social inclusion.

Inclusion of websites and event examples in this document and on the [Recovery Month website](#) does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 1: TRADITIONAL FORMAT

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness, and prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover from substance use and mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, all people have the fundamental and inherent value to be accepted and treated with respect, human dignity, and worth; and

WHEREAS, individuals should have access to fully participate in community life including economic advancement and prosperity; fair and decent housing; quality education; positive opportunities to benefit from and contribute to material, cultural, and social progress; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to educate our policymakers, friends and family members, health care providers, and businesses that substance use and mental disorders are treatable, and that people should seek assistance for these conditions, with the same urgency as they would any other health condition; and

WHEREAS, all Americans have the opportunity to access provisions within the Affordable Care Act and Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA), aimed to improve physical and emotional health while ensuring people will receive the care they need at a more reasonable cost; and

WHEREAS, substance use and mental disorders are serious public health problems. In 2009, 4.3 million people received treatment for a substance use disorder and 30.2 million people for a mental health problem (**2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health**), we must continue to reach the millions more who need help; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve long-term recovery, and learn how recovery positively benefits the Nation's overall well-being, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and **[name of State, city, county or treatment organization]** invite all residents of **[city/town]** to participate in National **Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover (Recovery Month)**; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I [name and title of your elected official], by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of [city, State, or locality], do hereby proclaim the month of September 2011 as

National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover

In **[city or State]** and call upon the people of **[city or State]** to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies supporting this year's theme, ***"Join the Voices for Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone."***

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this **[day of month]** day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two-hundred and thirty-sixth.

Signature
[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 2: MODERN FORMAT

Research shows that substance use and mental disorders are treatable, and people should seek assistance for these conditions, with the same urgency as they would any other health condition. Thus, it is essential for the 22.5 million people aged 12 or older who currently suffer from a substance use disorder and the 45.1 million adults aged 18 or older living with a mental health problem, to realize that recovery is possible to improve overall health and well-being. To build on that encouraging message, this year's **National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover (Recovery Month)** theme is **"Join the Voices for Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone."** The 22nd national campaign spreads the message that behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness, and that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover from substance use and mental disorders.

All people have the fundamental and inherent value to be accepted and treated with respect, human dignity, and worth. Individuals should have access to fully participate in community life including economic advancement and prosperity; fair and decent housing; quality education; positive opportunities to benefit from and contribute to material, cultural, and social progress.

In 2009, 4.3 million people aged 12 or older received treatment for substance use disorders and 30.2 million adults aged 18 or older received services for mental health problems according to the **2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health**. All Americans have the opportunity to access provisions within the Affordable Care Act and Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA), aimed to improve physical and emotional health while ensuring people will receive the care they need at a more reasonable cost

We, and those across the United States, need to recognize the achievements of those who have achieved long-term recovery, and share with others how recovery positively benefits society as a whole.

For 22 years, **Recovery Month** has worked to improve the lives of those suffering from substance use and mental disorders by raising awareness of the disease and educating communities about the treatment and recovery resources that are available. For the above reasons, I am asking the citizens of **[city or State]** to join me in celebrating this September as National **Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover.**

I, **[name and title of elected official]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2011 as

National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover

In **[city or State]** and call upon our community to observe this month with compelling programs and events that support this year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone."**

Signature
[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]